

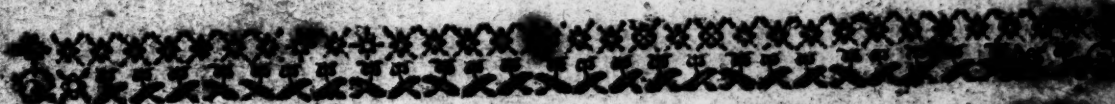
East Haddam Ct



MR. SALTER

ELECTION SERMON

MAY 12th, 1768.



MR. SALTER



A
S E R M O N,

Preached before the

General Assembly

Of the Colony of CONNECTICUT,

At HARTFORD,

On THE DAY OF THEIR

Anniversary ELECTION,

May 12th, 1768.

By *Richard Salter*, A. M.

PASTOR of the First Church of CHRIST in *Mansfield*.

N E W - L O N D O N :

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A
S E R M O N

Preached before the

*At a General Assembly of the Colony of CONN-
TICUT, holden at Hartford, in said Colony, on the
Second Thursday of May, Anno Domini, 1768.*

OR D E R E D, That SHUBAEL CONANT, Esq;
and Capt. SAMUEL GURLEY, return the Thanks
of this Assembly to the Rev'd Mr. RICHARD
WELTER, for his SERMON delivered before the Assem-
bly on the 12th Instant, and desire a Copy thereof, that
it may be Printed.

GEORGE WYLLYS, Secr'y.



An Election SERMON.



ESTHER X. 3.

FOR Mordecai the Jew, was next unto King Abasuerus, and great among the Jews, and accepted of the multitude of his brethren, seeking the wealth of his people, and speaking peace to all his seed.

THE words now read, present to our view, true patriotism, and public happiness in the closest connection therewith; not in theory, but really existent, in the character and administration of Mordecai the Jew, under the king Ahasuerus.

LONG had the jews enjoyed peace and quiet, during the successive reigns of several Persian princes, who were

were as famous for their moderation, as for the successes of their arms, the extent of their empire, or the grandeur of their courts : when Haman, a descendant of Agag, a former devoted king of the curs'd Amalekites, by the united influence, of his riches, and his craft, became the favourite of the king Ahasuerus, and was promoted to be prime minister of state.

AMIDST all his glory, he had the mortification, to be treated with a conscientious neglect, and scorn, by Mordecai a Jew ; whose highest employment, was that of a porter to the king's palace. This fill'd the haughty breast of Haman with the utmost indignation, and rais'd the old national enmity, of the Amalekite, against the Jew to its highest pitch.

NOT contented therefore, with the destruction of Mordecai, and scorning to seek his revenge on a single object, and of so low a character ; he plots the utter extirpation of the Jews from the empire, to gratify his proud and malicious resentments : and abusing the confidence of his master, he obtain'd a decree for that purpose ; which according to the laws of the empire, was irreverfible.

SECURE of carrying his point, he pleas'd himself with the prospect of the cruel massacre designed. But it was not long before his cursed plot was defeated by the prudence and application of Mordecai, and his zeal for the safety and happiness of his people ; together with the address and influence of Esther,

Esther his kinswoman, whom he had educated as his child, and whose tender mind he had formed, by the maxims of pure religion, and sincere benevolence to public usefulness; and who by her graceful and virtuous conduct, as well as singular beauty, had gained the favor of her prince, and was become his queen.

THE virtue of Mordecai had shone with an agreeable lustre in private life, and in the lower offices of service to his master; who had received a special proof of his loyalty and fidelity, in the discovery of a treasonable design against his life. But now Providence was pleased on occasion of Haman's villany, to call him forth to more public and extensive usefulness; and give him an opportunity to display his capacity and his virtue in an exalted station.

IN Haman we see the tyrant in real life; no sooner raised to power, than his selfishness and ambition, cruelty and revenge burst forth, in spite of reason, honor and conscience, and in defiance of the most venerable rights, and the claims of equity and mercy; and he disposes of the liberty, property and lives of thousands, at pleasure, and in a wantonness of rage beyond description. But the vengeance of heaven soon awoke to vindicate his people's wrongs; and he fell a victim thereto, and to the just resentments of his abused prince; before whom his villany was exposed, by the prudence of the queen, under the direction of Mordecai. Thus he dropped into oblivion, like other tyrants, unregretted and his memory rots.

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How strong, and beautiful is the contrast; when on the other hand we view the character of Mordecai! his capacity, wisdom, and vertue appear amiable in private, but much more in public life: in his most elevated station he is far from being elated in his mind above it; and notwithstanding all the temptations to avarice and ambition, cruelty and revenge, attending so great a transition and change, in his outward circumstances, the true patriot shines with distinguishing lustre, and discovers a greatness of soul, rising superior to all the influence of private and selfish passions. And the form of government, among the Persians, being monarchial, and become quite despotic, rendered the prudence, moderation and vertue of Mordecai the more conspicuous, and the more worthy of imitation.

BUT whatever forms of government different nations have been led into, from their differing genius and circumstances, by which they have consented to give up their natural rights, into the hands of one or more, it has been done in trust only: the sole original end and design of which, is therefore the public happiness. And perhaps each form is equally agreeable to the will of God, and capable of securing this great design, provided it falls into the hands of a wise and vertuous administration; whereof methinks the instance of Mordecai is no small proof. Yet that form of government, in which the liberty, property and life of the subject, hath the strongest security, must be the most eligible, as it is the most perfect.

SUCH

An Election S E R M O N.

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SUCH is the happy constitution of Britain and her Colonies, which God long preserve, against the secret machinations and open attempts of its enemies, domestic and foreign, who envy *her*, but especially *their* encreasing greatness, prosperity, and felicity.

THE character of a good ruler is to be drawn: and the qualifications for this office and trust, are to be determined, by the great end of government, the public good: and this is the standard, according to which, rulers are to form themselves to usefulness, in their advanced stations. And the influence of such a character and conduct, will be great, to secure the affection and loyalty of the subject; and to promote the felicity of the whole. My text very naturally leads us into, and confirms us in this thought.

SUCH was the character of Mordecai; who therefore, in the exercise of his high authority, not only rendered himself grateful to his prince; but perfectly ingratiated himself with his people; while he steadily pursued, this great end of government, the public weal. A character, and conduct like his, can hardly fail of commanding all that respect and obedience, which is a ruler's due.

MORDECAI was great with the king, being advanced to the highest post of government under him; and one he delighted to honour. He was equally great with the people; and by gaining their affections, he secured their allegiance to their prince, and their obedience to his own administration. The reason of

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all this greatness of Mordecai, was the greatness of his own mind, and the excellency of his government; the whole whereof, was directed to the common good, and under which, the people felt themselves easy, safe, and happy. For Mordecai the Jew, was next unto king Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews, and accepted of the multitude of his brethren, seeking the wealth of his people, and speaking peace to all his seed.

To decypher the character of a good ruler, from this example; and to shew its force, and influence to secure the confidence, respect and obedience of the subject, shall be my present business.

FIRST then,

I SHALL take some account of the character of a good ruler, as drawn in the text.

As the great end of civil government is the public good, capacity, and genius, wisdom, and prudence, courage and resolution, religion, and vertue, and public spirit, are the most obvious qualifications of a good ruler, and the most striking parts of his character, and all together form the true patriot. Such a one was Mordecai; and such civil rulers ought ever to be, in whose hands the whole, or the principal concerns of government are betruusted.

In the first place, Capacity and genius is necessary to the character of a good ruler.

WITHOUT this, Mordecai could never have rose to that eminency of station, he was honoured with;
nor

nor in any measure, have supported the dignity of it; nor answered the designs of his elevation. And how can the ends of government be attained, without a genius, and capacity suited thereto? when the lowest office in life can never be well discharged, without talents answerable to its nature, and design. Men's abilities, must be as extensive as their authority, to preserve the dignity, and secure the advantages of government. Jethro, Moses's father-in-law, a man versed in politics, gives Moses that advice, in the choice of magistrates, to which heaven fixed its approbation, (viz.) that they be able men, (i. e.) men of strength of genius, and that understand public business; as Moses afterwards, explains it; when he directs the people, to take wise men, and men of understanding, known among their tribes, to be rulers over them. And it was the commendation, of the heads of Issachar, that they were, men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do.

A NATURAL clearness, and coolness of thought, with a turn of mind towards government, improved by the study of men and books, and judicious observation, will render a man capable of business, in a good degree: And so essential is such a capacity and genius, that nothing can supply the defect thereof.

WHAT, but a perpetual series of blunders, and the most dismal confusion, as the consequence thereof, can be expected, from the administration of weak headed, short sighted, muddy brained men? who, so

far from meriting the character of good rulers, are, for the most part, the plagues of society, and the bane of public felicity; while their weak minds, and not less vain, commonly grow giddy with their advancement; and make them unwilling to be checked, or to take the advice of wiser men than themselves. And, be it, that the heart of a ruler destitute of capacity, is honest; yet he knows not where the true interest of the community lies, nor by what measures to pursue, and promote it: his benevolent designs therefore, prove abortive, for want of capacity to execute them to advantage. Besides, from a defect of understanding, equal to his trust, he is exposed to the intrigues of designing men, and to be made the tool of a party, or of some fawning parasite, or corrupt minister of state, whose interested views, and lust of power, can be gratified with nothing less, than the ruin of thousands. How just, then is that exclamation of Solomon? Woe unto thee, oh land, when thy king is a child!

ON the other hand, a state reduced to the brink of ruin, by prodigality and dissipation, or by selfishness and ambition, with its constant attendants, faction and party spirit; has been often saved, by a single man, in public place; and rescued from the destruction that visibly impended over it. This, Solomon long since observed; and therefore says, for the transgression of a land, many are the princes thereof; but by a man of understanding and knowledge, the state shall be prolonged.

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THE objects that are to employ the thoughts and study of magistrates, require a more than common extent of capacity, and strength of genius : such are the natural and social rights of mankind ; the history and laws of nature and nations ; the history and municipal constitutions of their own country ; the genius and interests thereof ; their connections with, or dangers from their neighbours ; the methods of best increasing the numbers and wealth of the subjects ; and the laws which will render their liberties more secure, and their necessary burthens more easy and equal ; encourage their trade, husbandry and manufactures ; promote vertue and religion, and suppress vice of every kind, and in every character. What extensive capacities ? What penetration and clearness of thought, and soundness of judgment, are requisite in this view, to render a magistrate useful, and a state happy ?

NOR is it every man of understanding, that is fit for a statesman. A man may have a noble genius for, and make vast improvements in various branches of science, or mechanic knowledge, and be thoroughly acquainted with the *belles lettres*, who has no understanding of government and politics, nor any genius for the law, or sufficient acquaintance with humane nature in general, or the particular constitution, and circumstances of the people he is to govern : and it is impossible, such a man should be a good ruler ; however he may be a man of wit or learning, and an honest christian.

MOREOVER, in this frail and passing state, in which

we have but little opportunity, for our own experience to serve us; there is need of the experience of past ages; and of a just discerning, to notice and correct former mistakes and errors; and to improve advantages obtained, and happy precedents, to promote not only the present, but the future felicity of the common wealth; which a good ruler will ever keep in view.

SECONDLY, Wisdom and prudence is not less necessary to form the character of a good ruler, than capacity and genius. Solomon, deeply sensible of the importance of such a qualification, made the acquirement of it, the great object of his attention; and the principal matter of his prayer to heaven, when he first entered on his government. Heaven heard, and answered with a rich supply of this, and every other needful gift and blessing. How conspicuous, was the wisdom of Mordecai, in the measures he took to defeat the cruel and bloody designs of Haman upon the Jews. By which he turned the mischief on the heads of their enemies, and procured safety for them, to his everlasting honour.

THERE are a variety of circumstances, that may attend a community; which expose it to the most imminent hazards, besides the constant and ordinary business of government, and occasions of the state; which call for singular measures of wisdom and prudence, to find out expedients, and fix upon the best means, for its relief: and if in such an important crisis, rulers are destitute of wisdom, adequate to the demand

demands and expectations of the state; its ruin is like to ensue, and will lie under their hands. And where parties and factions prevail, either through ignorance, or design, as too often happens; it will require the most prudent conduct, to silence murmurs, stop the mouth of faction, and restore peace and tranquility. Nor will a less degree of prudence serve to remove the mistakes, or prejudices, and obviate the designs of those who have it in their power to oppress and injure the community.

SOME men have a peculiar talent this way; and to find out the most happy expedients, in every case of public danger, and to pursue them with the greatest advantage, which must be a distinguishing ornament in their character as rulers. Whereas others, whose prudence may be sufficient to conduct the concerns of the public in a calm, are wholly nonplush'd in every special emergency and difficulty, and appear quite unequal to the trials they are called to encounter: they yield to them, sink under them, and leave all things to their own course; which necessarily involves the state in the utmost disorder and confusion, and endangers the total subversion of government. Sound wisdom in a ruler is the medium between temporizing caution, and rash precipitancy; each alike dangerous, and often fatal. And that ruler only, comes up to the character in the text, who hath such a greatness of mind, as to rise above every difficulty and danger, in the most tempestuous season and threatening

threatning crisis : and while he keeps the full possession of himself, calmly consults and steadily pursues those measures which have the most direct tendency to prevent the impending ruin ; or at least to lessen and mitigate the evils dreaded, and render them less pernicious.

I proceed to say,

THIRDEY, Courage and resolution are very essential to the character of a good ruler.

How firm and steady was Mordecai, under the most threatning aspects, and when nothing less than the total extirpation, and ruin of his people was plotted and decreed ! Instead of sinking under the prospects of this dreadful fate ; he rises, not to meet it undaunted, which is often but the false image of courage ; and properly stiled fool-hardiness, and presumption : but to obviate, and ward it off, and happily succeeds. Similar dangers call for similar prudence, application and resolution.

EVERY community lies exposed in some degree to foreign enemies and intestine feuds ; and if in any respects, dependant, to oppression from those, on whom they are so, thro' mistaken policy, or the influence of such, as have a lust for arbitrary power. Nor is any state so wholly free from crafty designing men, enemies of order and government, or of the liberties of their country ; as not in certain circumstances to endanger, at least its peace, if not its entire subversion, and ruin. And the follies of some, and vices of others, not seldom, reduce it to the brink of destruction. In these, and the

the like dangers, as well as when rulers are vilified, and reproached for their zeal and fidelity in their office; courage and steadiness is of absolute necessity. And a man that dare not confront, domestic or foreign enemies; assert the dignity of his station, and the constitutional rights belonging to it, against factious demagogues; or the just, reasonable, and constitutional liberties of the people, against the encroachments of arbitrary power; that meanly flies his post, or betrays his trust, on threatening appearances; that sneaks before the towering menaces of vice, or that sinks under the reproaches cast upon him for his fidelity:—The man, in short, that dares not do his duty in the face of danger, is surely not fit to be a ruler, nor can possibly be a good one.

THE fear of man, brings a snare, to a timorous mind; and every little danger, is aggravated, and enhanced, by a frightful fancy, and imagination: which byasses the judgment, and too often bribes the conscience. And who doth not see this to be sufficient to disqualify a man for being a ruler?

WHEN a state is sunk never so low, to despair of its emerging, and flourishing again, prevents, or enervates all endeavours for its relief; and tends to hasten and compleat its destruction. And to be irresolute, is almost as fatal, as to despair. A ruler of such a timorous make, must needs be hurried by those passions, which commonly precipitate the ruin he fears, and which he might with resolution have prevented. Calm consideration is interrupted, tho' absolutely necessary,

to guide the judgment, and fix the mind, in the choice, and pursuit, of the best, or only means of safety and deliverance.

In every dangerous crisis of the state then, happy is the people that have rulers of capacity and wisdom; to discern, and of courage and firmness, to pursue those measures, from which, under God, they may hope for a redress of grievances, and a removal of those evils, that threaten their ruin.

I go on to say,

FOURTHLY, Religion and virtue are essential to the character of a good ruler.

THERE is not a single character of a good ruler, in the bible, in which religion and virtue is not a principal part of it. This was a striking part of Mordecai's character, in private life: and when he left his private station, for the highest post in government, next the king, he left not his religion behind him. And it is to be presumed, that when a man has acquired a religious character, in private, he will support the same in public life. Yet it sometimes falls out otherwise, through the frailty of human nature, and the force of those temptations, that attend a public station.

WHERE men have no settled principle of virtuous conduct, we may reasonably expect it will always be thus. And a man destitute of integrity and principle, will be regardless of the great ends of government, and make it his business, rather to indulge

indulge his ease and pleasures, his avarice of ambition; than to discharge the duties of his post. In this case, men's capacity and genius, their wisdom and courage, will be prostituted to their selfish and sinister designs; or to the humours and lusts of others, on whom they are dependant. They often become venal, and by their examples teach others to be so: and sacrifice the interests and liberties of the community, to gratify their private passions, and to promote their personal advantage; and use all their policy and influence, to make those they most abuse, insensible of the wrongs done them, or to compel them to bear them; and to make others the tools of their avarice and ambition, and the instruments of their oppression and villainy. An inward principle of religion is therefore highly necessary in a ruler: for he that ruleth over men, must be just, ruling in the fear of God. And to fear God, and hate covetousness, are principal qualifications of the good ruler. Such a principle will be of use, to influence all the public measures; and to secure those divine aids and smiles, without which the arduous and important trust, assigned to rulers, can never be duly, or successfully, discharged.

THIS principle is of a divine nature and original; and a man informed and actuated thereby, will have a most sacred veneration for the Deity, will place his confidence in him, will labour to be conformed to him in a godlike temper and disposition, and

have an inviolable regard to his glory and interest, his will and law. This principle will in a very special manner, lead a ruler into a dependance on, and conformity to a glorious Christ; and to exhibit that righteousness and mercy, that truth, meekness, and gentleness, which are so conspicuous in the administration of his kingdom. It will also give force and energy to all the motives the gospel suggests, to a faithful discharge of the duties of his station; and bear them in on his mind in their full weight and importance. It will subdue his selfish passions, subordinate his private, to the public interests: and while it enlarges the mind, and enobles the spirit, will divert him from every low, mean, and criminal view and pursuit; and engage him to devote his time and talents, with steady zeal, application, and fidelity to the public good, and to deny himself in every respect to promote it.

THERE are indeed, no principles, but those of christianity, that are sufficient to make a man truly great; how much soever some of the heathen have been admired for their seeming greatness, and how much soever they have been proposed to imitation. Nor do I conceive a man truly great, who, out of vain glory, and worldly views, is lead to do some great things: nay, that Roman spirit, so often commended and extolled, which appears to be influenced only by the prospect of fame, riches, honours, and authority; which not only ceased to exert itself for
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the public good, when it met with ingratitude and injustice, neglect and contempt, suffering and reproach; but shrank, and shrivel'd up into a mean, dastardly fear, or self-love, that made them run upon the sword, as their only refuge and relief; is so far from deserving the encomiums given it, that christians should be rather cautioned against it, and taught to treat it with the contempt and abhorrence it deserves. 'Tis the christian religion only, that inspires the mind with fortitude and grandeur, to suffer in a noble cause, and not ingloriously desert it; nay, voluntarily to tender its services, when the state needs them, or is in danger. The post of honour, is not therefore, always, a private station, tho' sometimes, it may so happen.

I AM sensible, that a natural generosity of mind; the power of conscience in men destitute of a principle of true religion; nay even ambition, and interested views, may be improved by heaven, to render some men useful to the public; and they may discharge their trust to general satisfaction and applause. But if a ruler acting on no higher principles, may merit the approbation of the public; how much more will such deserve it, who act on the noble and exalted principles of christianity?

WE have indeed but little security for the good conduct of rulers that are destitute of religion, or for the divine smiles on their administration. Whereas we have the strongest grounds to hope for both, if they are men of sincere vertue.

RELIGION

RELIGION is venerable, in the esteem of all, but those who have abandoned themselves to debauchery and villainy, and whose consciences are perfectly seared, and callous; hence some men, to serve a low, selfish, and party design, put on a mask of religion, that they may be respectable, and the easier accomplish their designs. But if known, they ought to be the objects of the greatest contempt and abhorrence: nor is it unusual, that they betray themselves, and act out their true principles, in so open a manner, as to discover their detestable hypocrisy. It is ever to be expected, that he that is false to his God, will be unfaithful to men; nor is such a man, when known, to be trusted in the lower offices of life; and much less in the high stations of government. Nor can any thing be more preposterous and absurd, than to commit our properties, life, and liberties, to the care of a man, that pretends to no religion, or that evidences by his conversation, that he has none: for he that has no reverence for the Deity, cannot be supposed to have any regard for moral obligations, nor to be in any degree influenced thereby; and he that will sacrifice his own most valuable, yea eternal interests, to his vicious inclinations, will not fail to sacrifice those of the public (when they come in competition) to the same ruling passions.

Once more; Fifthly,

PUBLIC spirit is an essential qualification of a good ruler, and is inseparable from his character.

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THE ruler's office is for the public good, and if his spirit corresponds not with the design of his office, he is far from being a benefactor or a blessing; nor can any state flourish, where public spirit is not the characteristic of its rulers. This is a spirit of true benevolence, is therefore founded in, or rather a branch of true religion. The love of our neighbour springs from the love of God, as its true original and source; it is therefore inseparably connected with it. This was the spirit of Mordecai, in whom benevolence to his brethren, was as conspicuous and evident, as his love to God.

GENEROSITY and kindness, condescension and complaisance, were in him, the true marks of it. A man of this spirit, will ever feel for the public, as well as for himself; and the benign influences of his heart, will diffuse themselves, in the most beneficial and happy effects to thousands. He considers himself as the father of the people, when in the most exalted station; nor dildains to treat them as brethren. He views all his powers and trustments, as committed to him by the great parent of the universe, for the good of the whole; and he sleeps and wakes for the common benefit. An equal and ardent love of the whole, possesses his breast, and excites him to those measures, which wisdom and vertue dictate, whereby the whole may be made easy, safe, and happy. He knows no distinction of rich and poor, noble or ignoble, friends or foes; so as to avoid any particular acts of benevolence, which may promote the welfare of each; nor will the most ungrateful

grateful returns, for his disinterested good will, cause him to cease from the offices of kindness. His heart will be intent upon the public safety and felicity, ever his delight and joy; and to ward off dangers, and remedy evils; while he deeply regrets those he cannot heal, and the mischiefs he cannot prevent.

WHATEVER is useful or beneficial to society, will have his steady attention. Agriculture will be encouraged, till the wilderness become a fruitful field, and the desert blossom as the rose. Trade so nearly connected therewith, as the second source of wealth, will be protected and cherished, that his own community may derive riches and plenty from other parts of the globe, as well as their own. Liberty, next to religion, the darling of a generous mind, will be guarded with the most tender and watchful care. Injustice and immorality, dissipation and idleness, that ever weaken the sinews of the common wealth, will be frowned upon, and properly punished; and the contrary virtues supported, and encouraged, with a view to the dignity of the state, and its importance with its neighbours; one of the most probable means of its safety, and peace. Arts and sciences, under his countenance, and favourable auspices, will be cultivated and flourish; and yield a pleasing prospect, that wisdom and knowledge will be the stability of future times, as well as of the present. And above all, religion in its truth, and native simplicity and freedom, will be promoted, under a benevolent administration,
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by the best examples ; and provided for, and defended by such salutary laws, as come within the province of the magistrate ; and this with a special view to the divine favour and protection, without which no community can long subsist, and much less flourish.

SUCH are the exertions, and such will be the effects of true public spirit ; and with unwearied application will a ruler of this character, employ himself for the good of his fellow men, that are under his administration. While on the contrary, avarice or ambition, indolence or moroseness, mark the character of the man destitute hereof ; and speak him unfit, for any office of importance, in government.

HAVING thus drawn into view, some of the principal parts of the character, of a good ruler, from the instance in the text, I shall proceed to consider,

SECONDLY, The influence of such a character, well supported, to secure the confidence, respect, and obedience of subjects.

AFTER all that has been said in favour of passive obedience and non-resistance to what is called the divine right of magistracy in general, or of kings in particular ; it will remain for ever true, that the doctrines of arbitrary power, and consequently of slavery, are not the maxims of prudence, reason, or revelation ; and put into practice, tend to produce the most fatal convulsions in a state, unless ignorance, effeminacy, and corruption have prevailed to enervate mens spirits, to debauch their reason, and sink them into a stupid insensibility, almost equal to that of the brutes.

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In this case, while the language of despotism, in a proud usurper of the rights of mankind, raised to power by his own intrigues, or by the folly, or wickedness of others, is to this purpose. "I am vested with sufficient authority, to give law, and to demand unreserved submission and obedience; and have power in my hands to enforce it: he that fails therefore, may depend upon my severest resentments; and destruction shall be the fate of the man that dares oppose me." The abject minds of subjects, lost to all virtue and honour, may tamely yield; and they may reply, All that thou hast said, we will do, and will be obedient: Yet, what confidence have such subjects in their magistrate? How can they but entertain secret jealousies and suspicions, equally destructive of veneration, and love, of trust, and cordial submission? a slavish dread, and brutal subjection, or that which is forced, and insincere, is the most that can be pretended to. As mutual confidence and affection, between rulers and people, cannot fail of being destroyed by such arbitrary claims, so the people will be as pleased to have it in their power, to put to death even a prince, as ever they were to raise him to the throne: nor need we a large acquaintance with humane nature, or the history of nations, to be convinced of this: our own nation will indeed furnish us with proof hereof, the most ample and sufficient.

THAT the most hearty confidence, respect and obedience, is the magistrates due, perhaps, no one in the sober

sober use of reason, will deny. But the most likely and the only rational, and scriptural way of gaining and securing it, is for the magistrate to exhibit the patriotic character, in its full extent; and as a father, to pursue the common good and happiness of the subject. He that is thus, the minister of God to men, for their good, in his ruling capacity, not only fills his post with dignity and honour, but has all advantages on his side, to secure the confidence, respect and obedience of those he governs. For besides, the solemn repeated injunctions of divine revelation, to this purpose, let every soul be subject to the higher powers; enforced by a motive, drawn from the great end of magistracy and government, the good of the whole; which, by the way evidently determines the extent as well as design of it; as also, by a motive, drawn from the penal consequences, of an opposition of lawful authority, in this world, and the future: I say, besides such injunctions, which have a peculiar weight and influence on a people, not sunk in ignorance, and abandoned to debauchery: there is something in this character itself, that peculiarly strikes the mind, awes it to reverence, and engages it to love and obedience. It is the image of God on a ruler, and commands a proportionable respect.

RULERS are called gods, with regard to their office; and if they act in character, they become amiable and venerable, for their divine virtues; in which there is a certain engaging sweetness and majesty, not to be

described, which immediately possesses the mind, and gains its approbation, and makes it revere and honour them, and take pleasure in their commands, as it were by necessity and constraint. How acceptable was Mordecai to his brethren ! and how great the influence of his truly patriotic character and conduct, to secure all that confidence and affection, that reverence and submission, which he could wish for ! Nor is it without design, that the penman of his history, remarks the happy influence of his administration on the people. They felt themselves easy, safe, and happy under his government, and were fully confident of his capacity and integrity, and entirely at his devotion.

BUT then, the principle of self-love alone, will engage men to that obedience to good rulers, by which their own happiness may be promoted, and secured. They can feel the benign influences of a wise, righteous, and benevolent administration ; and without the labour of reasoning, and reflection, they generally perceive themselves to be safe and happy, when they are so. When people have this sense, and perception, it cannot fail of producing those returns of gratitude and confidence, respect and obedience, which are a good magistrate's due : or if under some particular burthens, the wisdom of rulers, sees fit to lay upon them, a few, whose views are narrow and contracted, complain and find fault ; it will rarely be found that their uneasiness is lasting, or grows up to any great degree of disaffection.

THERE

THERE are indeed, in all societies, some men, whose minds are so degenerate and base, as not only, not to be sensible of the beauty and dignity of the patriot character, in rulers: but from ambitious, and interested views, or an invidious and jealous disposition, are ever ready to find fault, and often become turbulent and restless. Such men are constantly on the watch for opportunities, from the unavoidable frailties, and mistakes of the best rulers, to raise some colourable objection against them; and practice the meanest arts to prejudice others. And while they pretend a great zeal for the public, cry out of danger; unreasonable burthens, prodigality, or unequal measures; they too often prevail to raise parties and factions, to the disturbance of the state. The bottom of all is, they, or their friends are out of place, and they have little or no prospect, under a wise and vertuous administration, of serving their selfish designs. And no men more like to take exceptions against a good administration, than those whose character is quite the reverse of the true patriot.

BUT however such men, may practice, and prosper a while, they commonly precipitate their own ruin: or the righteous judge of all, exposes their vile intrigues in open light, and they become the objects of universal contempt.

IN general, if mankind have not a quick sense of the excellency of true patriotism in a ruler; yet they know when they are well used; they have some sense of,

and value for their constitutional as well as natural rights, and can tell when they freely and fully enjoy them; and will not destroy their own safety and happiness, by a contempt of, or oppugnation to that authority, which is the great means of securing it.

It is certain, the wiser and better part of the community, will have such grateful resentments of the fatherly tenderness, and watchful care and fidelity of good rulers, as to engage all their interest and influence, in support of their authority; and to lighten as much as possible their burthens, by promoting the loyalty and affection of their fellow subjects. And if a civil administration, be but tolerably good, experience shews, that those in it, are honoured while they live, by the wise and virtuous; and their memory is rever'd long after they are dead: how much more, will this be the case, where rulers answer the distinguishing character of Mordecai, and approve themselves true patriots, in the most extensive view.

The doctrines of arbitrary power, are therefore as useless and insignificant, as they are absurd and unscriptural; in as much as, rulers have it in their power to secure all that confidence, respect, and obedience, from subjects, that is their due, or that they can justly desire, in a way more easy and safe. Let them only act up to, and support their proper character as ministers of God for good to the people; and they may be morally assured, of their hearts and purses, yea, of their lives when the state needs them.

SUCH

An Election S E R M O N.

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SUCH is the influence, which the patriotic character and conduct in rulers, will have on the minds of subjects, to secure their confidence, respect, and obedience.

IN these views, the wisdom and duty of rulers, with the most natural and effectual motives to enforce it, are plainly pointed out. And we have all reason, of thankfulness to heaven, that our rulers are men of this character.

NOR can a better acknowledgment be paid to his Honour, the Governor, with the honourable the Deputy-Governor, and Assistants, (whom I would address on this occasion) under whose wise, vertuous and benevolent administration, we have enjoyed much peace and quietness; than, in the name of this people, to express our desires, and hopes, that you may be still continued, in your important stations, to exert your well known capacities, and spirit, in watching for the liberty, peace, and happiness of the community. And we freely express our confidence, that it will be your care to form your selves, under heaven's influence, to a yet nearer resemblance of the perfect model, of true patriotism, in its most extensive view: and thereby render your selves most useful, and the people most happy.

AND as the greater part, of the former Representatives of the people, are returned to serve in the present general assembly; it speaks their confidence, worthy Sirs, in your wisdom, and integrity; and is a
powerful

powerful obligation on you, to make the most vigorous efforts, answerable to the patriotic character, to save them from impending ruin.

You cannot be insensible, honoured, and worthy senators, of the distresses, many are involved in, by their own dissipation and prodigality; and what influence this has had upon; and how much it has affected others, that have been more industrious and frugal. Nor are you ignorant of our embarrassments, by the late parliamentary resolutions, and regulations: nor are *we* wholly insensible of the dangers and calamities we are threatned with, which can scarce be painted in too horrible and gloomy colours.

We were ready to bless ourselves, when the stamp act was repealed, in the pleasing prospect of future tranquillity and peace; and the lasting enjoyment of our distinguishing privileges. And tho' the resolutions of parliament, at that time, respecting their constitutional power over America, gave us no small concern: yet we were ready to hope, that power would never be exerted to our disadvantage, or the prejudice of our natural and constitutional rights, till their regulations since, have convinced us of our mistake.

I WOULD be far from thinking, much more from hinting, that, that august assembly, the guardians of the constitution, and of the liberty and property of the subject, have formed a system to enslave the colonists: whatever may have been the ambitious or interested

interested views of any particular favourite, minister, or statesman, jealous of, or invidious towards our increasing greatness, prosperity and felicity. And it may be justly presumed, the people of Britain, tenacious of their liberties as they are, would not suffer a system, of so fatal a tendency to her, as well as her colonies, to be carried into execution: since it could be viewed in no other light, than as a prelude to their own slavery and ruin.

IN this most critical and alarming situation, our eyes are to you, our honoured and worthy rulers, next to God, to exert yourselves as your wisdom shall judge most loyal, decent, and proper to obtain a redress of our grievances. And as, without doubt, the British parliament have been induced to make those resolves, and regulations, that we think, bear so hard, on our natural and constitutional rights, from misinformations, and abusive representations of us; it seems, may I be allowed to say it, to belong to you, to rectify their mistakes, and vindicate us from every injurious aspersion. And such is our opinion, of the wisdom, equity, and tenderness of our gracious Sovereign, and of the great council of the nation; that we promise our selves, upon suitable petitions, and remonstrances of the united, and loyal colonies, by their respective assemblies, we may obtain the wished for relief. We take it for granted, you will not excuse your selves; tho' if any should happen to be of this turn of thought, and it would not be esteemed impertinent,

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pertinent, and assuming, I should with all deference, remind them of the message, of the worthy Mordecai, to queen Esther, chap. 4. 13, 14. *Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, Think not with thy self, that thou shalt escape, in the King's house, more than all the Jews. For if thou altogether holdest thy peace, at this time; then shall there, enlargement, and deliverance, arise to the Jews from another place, but thou and thy father's house, shall be destroyed: and who knoweth that thou art come to the kingdom, for such a time as this?* We persuade ourselves, at least, that you will never be influenced, by the menaces of power, the artful insinuations of its tools, the examples of others, or the temptations of honour, or interest, (under a pretence of obedience to superiors) to betray the privileges of your country; or do any thing to fix an arbitrary administration upon us; however coloured with an appearance of law, and constitutional authority.

I SHALL not need, to recommend to your consideration, the importance of frugality, and industry, among the inhabitants of this colony: nor will you fail to give all due encouragement thereto, as well as to our own manufactures. And suffer me to add, that the distressed state we are in, on account of our amazing debts; the want of a sufficient medium of trade; the uncommon multiplication of law-suits, and singular protraction of their issues, in the courts of justice; and the astonishing consumption of spirituous liquors,
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are worthy of, and call for your attention. And the visible growth and prevalence of vice, dissipation, and debauchery, demands at this day a more vigorous exertion of yourselves, to suppress and discountenance it. Learning, we doubt not, will ever have your patronage; and we hope, the College, in particular, will not be destitute of all needful assistance, to attain in the most happy and effectual manner, the great ends of its institution. And above all things, that you will support, and promote to the utmost, the religion of the gospel, as the surest means of our prosperity, safety and felicity.

GREAT is the weight of the public trust. While therefore you receive it with caution, and the wisest consideration, as leading into scenes, not of ease and pleasure, but of burthen, and care, especially in the present day; and enter upon it with a becoming sobriety, and self diffidence, and resolved dependance, on him, whose is wisdom and counsel, and every needful gift and blessing; and engage your selves to the greatest application, and unwearied efforts, to approve your selves faithful in the service of God, and your generation; you may hope for the divine guidance and smiles, in your future administrations. And in the steady pursuit of the common good, in all those ways, your wise and benevolent minds shall dictate; you will have the approbation of your own consciences; will render your selves acceptable, to the multitude of your brethren, at least, the wiser and better part of them; and raise a monument to your honour, in

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the grateful remembrance of this, and succeeding ages; more lasting than brass or marble; and what is infinitely more, you will meet with the divine acceptance, and a large reward, in proportion to your fidelity, and the numberless important blessings, you will be instrumental of diffusing to thousands.

SUCH is the character the gentlemen of the sacred order, generally sustain among us, that I may with the greatest assurance engage on their behalf, that they will not depart from the generous, loyal, and religious principles of the fathers of this country: but that they will steadily, and with equal order, exert themselves, in their place and station, to support the honour and dignity of government, and to enforce the duty of the subject, and cultivate loyalty, peace, and good order, with a love of the English constitution, and the practice of every social virtue. And especially, that they will urge on men, the peculiar doctrines, important precepts, and engaging motives of the gospel; with a view to promote true and vital religion, as not only the means of their private and personal happiness; but as the alone sure basis of public virtue, and felicity.

I MAY also fairly presume, it will be the care of the wise and the vertuous, not to encrease the burthens of government: but on the contrary, to discountenance unreasonable jealousies, murmurs, and complaints; expose the low arts and intrigues of designing men, to deserved reproach and contempt; and prevent as much as possible, factions and parties: while at the same time,

time, with the firmest union, and most manly and christian resolution, they assert and maintain their natural and constitutional rights; and are ready to spend their treasure and their blood, in the noble cause of civil and religious liberty.

AND methinks, every one capable of the least reflection or prospect, should unite in the most vigorous endeavours, to promote peace and loyalty, vertue, œconomy, and religion in the present dark and cloudy day.

It would betray a want of gratitude to heaven, on this occasion, as well as a narrow contracted turn of thought, not to observe the divine patronage of right and liberty in Britain, from its most early times. Britain, most highly favoured of God, in the preservation of her civil and religious freedom, while most of the neighbour nations, have been enslaved to despotic power, and arbitrary sway; and the tyranny of prelates, as well as princes. Let her rejoice herein, and learn soberly and vertuously to use both her power, and her liberty, which will thus be, as it has been, her glory and her safety.

'Tis worthy of remark, that not all the changes, that have passed over her, have ever yielded an opportunity to her enemies, to deprive her of her darling liberty: tho' at times it has been greatly oppressed, and in the utmost danger. The weakness and wickedness of her princes, and their counsellors, the treasons and rebellions of her subjects, the invasions of foreigners, have often reduced her to the last extremity. But heaven has
seasonably,

reasonably interposed, and by some surprising and unexpected turn, has made all their injurious attempts, subservient to fix her liberty on a more solid basis, and to guard it with stronger securities. A plain intimation this, that God never gives men up to be slaves, till they loose their national virtue, and abandon themselves to slavery.

THE establishment of the succession to the imperial crown of Great-Britain, in the illustrious house of Hanover has been a most happy and effectual means, under God, of preserving the British rights and constitution: while the princes thereof have nobly maintained the dignity of their station, by a sober improvement of the prerogative, within its constitutional limits, and a steady aim to live and reign in the affections of their subjects. Never was religious and civil liberty more secure, loyalty more cordial, arts and sciences better cultivated, trade more flourishing, domestic peace and tranquility more stable, or Britain more the pride of her sons, or the envy and terror of her foes; than under their paternal and patriotic administration. Her glory has been rising, with growing lustre, to the most exalted summit, in the age and reign of George the third, our lawful and most gracious sovereign. Heaven grant it may be perpetuated, and still (if possible) increase: for, so far are we from envying her, that her grandeur and happiness is our boast, and our connections with, and constitutional dependance on her, what we wish the most lasting permanency to. May she ever flourish, and under her shadow may we be safe.

WHAT

WHAT thanks owe we to heaven, in special, for our distinguishing privileges, civil and religious ! and that when they have been so often threatened, deliverances have been seasonably granted ! auspicious deliverances to Britain, as well as her American Colonies : alike interested in the important cause of liberty, and the happy events by which it has been rescued from its dangers, and amply secured.

NOR should we forget the noble patrons of liberty, on the other side the atlantic ; who not long since, so boldly espoused, and effectually pleaded its cause ; as to obtain a repeal of the stamp act : nor those worthy patriots in America, who then, or more lately appeared in its defence ; among whom the ingenious, generous, sensible, spirited, and loyal FARMER, deserves our peculiar notice and acknowledgments. May they all still continue their benevolent efforts, in the important cause ; and may their names be handed to posterity, with the most grateful sense of their friendly offices ; and after a long series of the most beneficent and extensive services to their country, may they receive the rewards, that ever await such distinguished merit, and public usefulness.

If we call to mind the ideas we entertained, at the close of the late war, or on the repeal of the stamp act ; with what exultation and triumph were we ready to sing, the snare is broken, and we are escaped ! We then congratulated ourselves, and each other, on the wondrous things God had wrought for us, and in the pleasing prospect of lasting tranquility and peace, and the full unmolested

losted enjoyment of civil and religious liberty: which to secure, our fathers spent the whole labour of their lives, with an amazing treasure, and many of them their blood. Here thought we, may we now sit, under our own vine, and fig-tree, and reap the fruit of our own and our fathers toil and expence, secure from the rage of the enemy; and from the tyranny of bigotted prelates, the capricious humour of arbitrary ministers, and the power of lawless sway. Here shall our parent state, still tender of our liberties as of her own, find all the returns of filial duty and affection from her true born sons, that she can desire; and be honored, strengthened and enriched, by their growing numbers, and encreasing commerce and wealth. Here arts and sciences, and every useful manufacture shall flourish, and make continual advances towards perfection. Here religion shall remain, and be preserved undefiled, in the doctrines of faith, the duties of the christian life, and that worship of God, which is most agreeable to primitive evangelical simplicity: and from hence shall be diffused through unnumbered tribes of heathen, and bring them to the knowledge, profession, and obedience of the truth; and the desert shall blossom as the rose: and God, even our own God, shall bless us, and we shall see his salvation.

SUCH were the bright and blissful scenes that opened to our view. But oh, the mutability of human affairs! How soon are these agreeable prospects changed for those which are most dismal! the sad fruit of our own folly and wickedness. A gloomy cloud has gathered over

over our heads, and intercepts every pleasing vision and hope, and portends the most insupportable and fatal calamities. This has roused the attention of the most thoughtless, and filled the minds of all the friends of civil and religious liberty, with anxious solicitude, and engaged them to (at least) a seeming union and vigour, in promoting industry, œconomy and manufactures, as the great means of the salvation of their country : which is truly praise-worthy. But methinks the conduct of Esther and Mordecai, together with the Jews, under their distresses, and when the proud and revengeful Haman had obtained a decree for their total extirpation ; comes most strongly recommended, as a pattern and precedent ; I do not say from a similarity of circumstances, so much, as from the justice and propriety of the thing in itself ; and from the happy success that attended it. I mean, that of religious fasting and prayer. This, to be sure, in the present alarming crisis, cannot be improper for particular persons, families, societies, or the public. And the experience we have often had of God's gracious readiness to hear, and save us in our distresses ; as well as the promises of his word ; together with the assurance, our reason must give us, that without heaven's interposition, and the continuance of the divine patronage of our rights and liberties, all our own efforts for relief will be vain ; conspire to engage us to apply to God in this way heretofore. Nor let us expect his gracious regards, unless herewith, we put away the evil of

our doings, and become a vertuous and religious people. This Sirs, this is the only, and blessed be God, it is a sure way to recover and secure the divine favour and smiles we have forfeited, to obtain a redress of our grievances, and to have our liberties restored and confirmed to us, and to derive them down to unborn ages: for we are assured that God will be with us, while we are with him; he will not leave, or forsake us. *Know therefore, that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy, with them that love him, and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations.*

9:7:49

T H E E N D.

